

UNITED SOCIETY

AN A C C O U N T
✓ OF THE
UNITED SOCIETY
FOR

Visiting and Relieving the SICK,

Instituted in the Year, 1777.

NOW HELD

In the WILLOW-WALK, *St. Agnes Le Clair,*

Near the TABERNACLE, *Moorfields;*

Lately held in TYSON-STREET, *Bethnal-Green.*

" In earnest we would bear in Mind,
" The Poor, the Sick, the Long-confid'd,
" With such we sympathize;
" To such we feel Compassion move,
" To such we would appear in Love,
" And wipe their weeping Eyes."



L O N D O N:

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The Recommendation.

Among many other Subscribers to this Institution are the following Ministers of the Gospel, who have not only given us their Money as a Token of their Approbation, but have earnestly recommended the same to the Patronage of others.

The Rev. Mr. Berridge,
Rev. Mr. Hill,
Rev. Dr. Peckwell,
Rev. Mr. Jofs,
Rev. Mr. M. Wilkes.
Rev. Mr. West,
Rev. Mr. Durant.

The Recommendation.

Among many other Subscribers to
this Institution are the following
Ministers of the Gospel, who have
not only given us their liberal
a Token of their Affection, but
have earnestly recommended the
cause to the Favour of others.

The Rev. Mr. Burdick

Rev. Mr. Hill

Rev. Dr. Peckwell

Rev. Mr. Jos.

Rev. Mr. M. Wilkes

Rev. Mr. Wells

Rev. Mr. Durant



T H E

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THIS Institution having had the Approbation of, and been recommended by several Ministers of the Gospel, and also having received repeated Subscriptions from several benevolent Gentlemen, to assist us in carrying on the Lord's Work, We need not multiply Words to shew the Necessity and Utility of such an Institution. But we think it our Duty to give the Subscribers to this Charity every Information in our Power, in what manner their Money is disposed of, and likewise to inform them, that the Lord has been graciously pleased to bless our Visits to the Souls of several of our Fellow Sinners,

by making us instrumental in bringing them to the Knowledge of Salvation, and in comforting and building up many of God's dear Children, who were cast down in their Souls; likewise in restoring some who had backslidden from God.—These things we trust is what we have most in view, as no Member has any temporal Benefit whatever; yet we desire to acknowledge, to the Glory of God, that we find it very profitable to our own Souls. Our Calls to visit are very numerous, and the Distresses of the Sick, Industrious Poor, are in many Cases very great: We therefore humbly solicit the Continuance and further Support of those Gentlemen who have already subscribed to this Charity — Subscriptions will also be thankfully received from others who are desirous to relieve the Distresses of the sick, industrious Poor. We hope the Lord will ever keep us watchful against every Abuse, and humbly look unto him for a Blessing.



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A C C O U N T, &c,

THE Manner in which this Society
T had its Origin was as follows:
Six Christian Friends used to meet
in Rotation at each other's House
for Prayer and Singing, on a Lord's-Day
Afternoon, during which time they had fre-
quent Calls to visit sick People, in order to
pray by them; and frequently seeing great
Distress, Compassion excited to relieve them,
and sometimes to give more than was pru-
dent, being working men themselves. (Du-
ring this manner of Meeting we desire to
notice one particular Circumstance: Being
one Day in Prayer together, a Person in the
House overhearing, the Lord was pleased to
make it the means of their Conversion.)

They continued to meet in this manner
for several Months, frequently making Col-
lections amongst themselves and Friends:—
But in order to have something before-hand
to

to take with them when the Lord was pleased to call them, and to make it more easy to themselves, they thought it good to follow the Apostle's Advice, to lay by something on the first Day of the Week. They therefore commenced a Society on the fourth Day of May, 1777, and agreed that each Member should pay at least One Penny per Week.

In answer to Prayer, others soon joined them, so that in the remainder of that Year the Number of Visits amounted to Fifty-one, and the Sum distributed among the Distressed was 5l. 17s.

In the Year 1778, the Number of Visits was One Hundred and Eleven, and 10l. 12s. was given to the Distressed.

In the Year 1779, the Number of Visits was One Hundred and Forty-seven,—given to the Distressed, 12l. 17s. 6d.

In the Year 1780, the Number of Visits was Two Hundred and Ninety-five; and the Sum given to the Distressed, 20l. 1s. 6d.

In the Year 1781, the Number of Visits was Three Hundred and Ninety-two, and 39l. 19s. was given to the Distressed.

Towards the End of this Year (our Money frequently coming far short, being obliged to leave many deserving Cases unrelieved) we made application to several Gentlemen to assist us by Subscription, but not being very well known, and our Institution not very well understood, we obtained but four
Sub-

Subscribers this Year, yet the Hope of doing Good to others, encouraged us to continue our Applications for Subscribers.

Accordingly, in the beginning of the Year 1782, after having got the Recommendations of several Ministers, we spent a whole Day in making Applications for Subscribers, when we had different Success at different Places; some spake rather *roughly* to us, others received us kindly, gave us their Subscriptions freely, approved of our Plan, and wished us Success, amongst whom were six Persons who generously subscribed a Guinea each, and several others have since favoured us with their Subscriptions, which has much increased the Usefulness of this Society.

In the Month of October, we received a Ten Pound Note, inclosed in a Letter from a Gentleman, whose Benevolence the Poor have oftentimes happily experienced, wherein he was pleased to say, "he much approved of our Proceedings, and hoped a Covenant God would be with us, and make us instrumental of much Good to the Bodies and Souls of many."

By the kind Assistance of Subscribers, and our own weekly Collections, the Number of Visits this Year, 1782, to Objects sick and in Distress, was Nine Hundred and Seventy-five; and the Sum of 112l. 15s. was given to the same, from Two to Four Shillings each, according to the Number of the Family and greatness of the Distress.—

Thus

Thus hath the Lord been pleased to own and bless our weak Endeavours: To His Name be all the Praise.

With regard to the Spiritual Good this Society have been instrumental in doing, as weak Instruments in the Hands of the Lord, it is not in our Power to give a full account of, for it is said, "Cast thy Bread upon the Waters, for thou shalt find it after many Days"—yet we have thought it right to relate a few Cases, well known to many amongst us, for the Satisfaction and Encouragement of the Subscribers to this Society in general.

The first Fruit of our Labour of Love was a poor lame Woman in *Keate-Street*, *Spi-talfields*, who was called by the Instrumentality of this Society about a Month before her Death; she was a Woman who before lived an immoral Life, so that the Change which Divine Grace made in her was evidently seen by those about her; her Words a little before her Death were very expressive of the Love of God which she experienced in her Soul, and with Wonder and Admiration at what the Lord had done for her, she died very happy in the Faith of Jesus Christ.

A Man and his Wife, and two Children, sick with a Fever, who lived in *Whitehall-Yard*,

Yard, Bethnal-Green, were visited by the Members of this Society, during their Sickness; the Lord was pleased to take both the Children by Death, and to bring both the Man and his Wife to the Knowledge of Salvation, by the Visitors from this Society. The same Man, after his Conversion, called on an old Companion in sin, to persuade him to go with him to hear the Word of God, who complied with the same, where the Lord was pleased to meet with him. It also pleased God, soon after his Conversion, to afflict this Man with Sickness, which ended in his Death: During his Sickness, he was visited by this Society, and in visiting the Husband, the Lord was pleased to make us instrumental in bringing the Wife to the Knowledge of Himself, who is now a Member of this Society.

A poor Woman in a Decline, in *Crompton-Street*, Clerkenwell, was visited by the Members of this Society; she was very ignorant in spiritual Things; when asked what Hope she had for Eternity? she said, "she had said her Prayers, and done many good things, and that God was merciful, therefore concluded all was well." She was told that God was just and Righteous, as well as merciful; and if she had not kept the whole Law, she was under the Curse of it, with many other things, which the Lord was pleased to follow by Conviction, which ended in her Conversion. A little before her Death she desired her Friends to let the

Society

Society know that they were the Means of bringing her to the Knowledge of Salvation. She died very happy.

A young Man, in a deep Consumption, was visited by the Members of this Society; he was very ignorant of the Way of Salvation; the Hope he gave us of Eternity was, that he was not so bad as many others, and that he depended on God for Mercy; he was told with respect to his Goodness, that he was a Sinner in the Sight of God, and no better than the vilest; which he said, he could not believe; but the Lord was pleased to bless the Exhortation, and convince him that he was a great Sinner, which made him cry earnestly for Salvation: The Lord was pleased to satisfy the Desire of his Soul, and he died very happy in the Faith of Jesus Christ.

A poor Woman, in *Wells-Street*, Oxford-Street, was visited by the Members of this Society; she lay many Weeks ill in a Decline, was repeatedly visited for several Weeks, and the Lord owned and blessed our Visits, and made us instrumental in bringing her to the Knowledge of Salvation: She died, and left a good Testimony behind her, that she is gone to be with Jesus.

A poor Man, in *Haberdashers Almshouse*, was visited by this Society: He acknowledged he was very ignorant of God and his Ways; said he had been a great Sinner; he was told of the awful Consequence of Sin, and at the same time that Christ was the
only

only Saviour of lost Sinners, that there was Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins. In visiting him afterwards, he said God had blest our Visit to his Soul, and we have reason to believe he died in the Lord. A little before his Death he said, "I wish I could believe," and that he hoped God would appear unto him as his reconciled Father in Christ. The last Word he was heard to say was, "Lord, save me, or I perish."

The last Person we would now mention, was a Woman in *Slaughter-Street*, Bethnal-Green, called by the Instrumentality of this Society about ten Weeks before her Death: It was not long after the Lord convinced her of Sin, before he appeared to her as a God of Love in Christ Jesus; her Disease was a Consumption; at times she laboured under great Pain of Body, but she enjoyed much of the Presence of God. We found it very good to our own Souls to visit her. A little before her Death she was asked, if Christ was still precious? she said, "He was more and more precious to her Soul, and that she could say with the Apostle, that she had a *Desire to depart, to be with Christ.*" She died very easy, and very happy in the Lord; and she acknowledged several times, that this Society was the only Means of bringing her to the Knowledge of the Lord.

Others, we have reason to hope, are now under saving Conviction of Sin, and are

B seeking

seeking the Lord in Sincerity : Among whom is an aged Widow, Ninety-one Years of Age.

“ CHRISTIAN, wouldst thou in Grace excel,
Wouldst thou enlarge thy Store ?
Use what thou hast with liberal Zeal,
And God will give thee more.

“ Let not thy sacred Talents lie
Conceal'd beneath the Ground,
But bless thy Fellow-Christians, by
The Treasures thou hast found.

“ Comfort the Feeble and Oppress'd,
With Tokens of thy Love,
Then shall thy Soul be well refresh'd,
And water'd from above.

“ Shew kind Affection, special Care,
To the afflicted Poor ;
Give freely what thou hast to spare,
And God will give thee more.

“ The liberal Heart, the liberal Hand
Jehovah deigns to bless :
By such he will most surely stand,
And keep them from Distress*.”

For further Particulars respecting the Manner in which this Society is conducted, we submit to the Subscribers the Perusal of the following Rules.

* The above Verses were wrote by an afflicted Young Woman : See “ SONGS IN THE NIGHT,” lately published.



RULES AND ORDERS

TO BE OBSERVED BY THE MEMBERS
OF THIS SOCIETY.



I.

THAT Every Person desirous of becoming a Member of this Society, shall be recommended by one of the Members thereof, and the Stewards then acting shall ask the said Member concerning the Walk and Conversation of the Person recommended.

II.

That every Person, at his or her Entrance shall pay *Three-pence*, and *Three-pence* for a Book of Orders, &c.

III.

That this Society shall admit as many Members of Brothers and Sisters as may be
B 2 inclined

inclined to enter, provided they are those we have reason to think are seeking the Lord in Sincerity.

IV.

That Twelve of the Members shall serve (by Election) as a Managing Committee, for six Months, to meet the last *Thursday* in each Month, at Eight o'Clock in the Evening, or oftener if found needful, to transact such Business as they think necessary for the Good of this Society, the Result of which Business shall be laid before the Society, the Lord's-Day following, for their Approbation: And if any Member of this Society shall have any thing to relate which does not immediately concern the Business of the Lord's-Day, they shall apply to the said Committee, at their aforesaid Meeting, or when they shall appoint, so as the Business of the Lord's Day may not be impeded.

V.

That Six of the Committee shall be chosen every Quarter, in the following manner: On every general quarterly Meeting, the Members then present shall be separately called upon by the Clerk, beginning at the senior Member, if they chuse to stand Candidates, untill the Number of Twelve. But if that Number should not offer themselves, then the senior Member of the last Committee shall nominate such Member or Members as he thinks fit.

VI. That

VI.

That Four of the Committee, in Rotation shall meet every Lord's-Day, to act as Stewards, Two to receive the Monies paid in, and Two to receive Petitions from those Members who have been called to visit the Sick, and seen their Distress; and the said Stewards shall visit those whose Petitions are accepted, or appoint some others in their room, and shall act as they see meet (so far as the following Rule will admit), and the Stewards or others shall the next time they attend the Society give some Account of the Objects they visited.

VII.

That not less than *Two Shillings* shall be given to any Object presented to this Society, nor more, except there is *Ten Shillings* in the Box, then they may give *Two Shillings and Sixpence*; if *Fifteen Shillings* in the Box, *Three Shillings*; if *Twenty Shillings* or more in the Box, then *Four Shillings*, if Necessity requires it. And every Member shall pay into the Box, at least *One Penny* per Week, or more if they think proper.

VIII.

That any Member or Members having Objects of Distress to present for Relief to this Society for themselves or others, shall be in the Society-Room by Three o'Clock, and shall produce a plain, written Direction,
where

where the said Objects of Distress may easily be found; and no Object of Distress shall be presented for Relief in any other Member's Name, but in the Name of the Member, who first presented the same during that Illness.

IX.

That the Steward shall ask every Petitioner, by what Providence of God they were called to visit the Object they present? and if it can be proved that the said Object was sought after, he shall not be relieved: But if any Dispute should arise concerning any Matters of this Society, it shall immediately be put to a Ballot.

X.

That as in some Cases it may not be proper for the Stewards to visit, therefore they shall be at Liberty to nominate Two of the Sisters, whom they think proper, to visit in their room.

XI.

That no Member shall receive any Fee or Reward, nor any temporal Relief from the Society, on any Pretence whatever.

XII.

That no Petition shall be accepted for the Relief of Lying-in Women, except they have lain in one Month.

XIII. That

XIII.

That the Monies subscribed and collected shall be given only to those who are sick and in Distress, whether Professors or otherwise, Persons in Workhouses and Hospitals excluded.

XIV.

That the Hours of Meeting be from Two to Four on the Lord's-Day Afternoon; at which time the Meeting to be opened and concluded with Prayer.

XV.

That if any Member hears or knows any thing immoral in his Brother or Sister, they shall in Love reprove them alone; they not regarding the Reproof, the Thing then to be communicated to Two Brothers or Sisters, and if that has not the desired Effect, they shall then be presented to a general Meeting; after which if they continue hardened, they shall be excluded the Society.

XVI.

That those Members who neglect clearing the Book on the first Lord's-Day in the Month, shall be deprived of the Liberty of presenting any Person for Relief during the said Month.

XVII.

That there shall be a Feast of Love annually on *Christmas-Day*, when the Accounts
of

of this Society shall be reported to the Society at large; at which time all who are seriously inclined may be admitted; at the Conclusion of which a Collection shall be made for the Benefit of the Box.

N.B. Subscriptions are received at the Society-Room, or by the Clerk or Stewards of this Society, on their producing the Subscription Book of this Society.

✂ Any Person inclined to bequeath a Legacy to this Society, by his last Will, is desired to do it in the following Form.

———— Item, I give and bequeath unto A. B. and C. D. the Sum of _____ upon Trust, to the Intent that they or one of them do pay the same to the Clerk (for the Time being) of a Society, who now call themselves “The UNITED SOCIETY for Visiting and Relieving the Sick,” Instituted in the Year 1777, which does, or lately did, meet in the Willow-Walk, St. Agnes le Clair, near the Tabernacle, Moor-Fields; which said Sum I desire may be applied towards carrying on the charitable Designs of the said Society.



